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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: NARCOTIC DRUGS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: NARCOTIC DRUGS (A/47/80-S/23502, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/210, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/344, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/378, A/47/391, A/47/471 and A/47/564)

1. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that drug abuse control was part of the wider peacemaking role of the Organization and represented a major effort in preventing the social dislocation, political destabilization and financial ruin caused by drugs in countless developing countries. The guiding principles of the UNDCP strategy were based on a balanced, global approach taking into account structural economic, social and cultural factors that had contributed to the problem of drug abuse in the past two decades. That approach took into consideration certain changes that had occurred in the phenomenon of drug abuse itself and attempted to foresee possible dangers in the future. Above all, the strategy aimed at encouraging the development of a coherent, integrated and balanced programme.

2. In the short term, there was a need to act vigorously to reduce both demand and supply and develop concrete, aggressive measures against drug trafficking in all its organized criminal forms. While increasing cooperation with its established partners, UNDCP was developing enhanced relations with local communities, regional bodies, businesses and labour unions. An essential short-term priority was to bring about the speediest possible ratification by most Member States of the United Nations drug control conventions. The Programme was helping Governments update and harmonize national legislation, promoting international cooperation against money laundering and establishing a more effective control system over chemical precursors.

3. In the medium term, UNDCP was focusing on prevention, promoting effective cooperation in drug abuse control among all major international organizations and encouraging the elaboration of regional, subregional and national strategies reflecting the Programme's overall global strategy. In the long term, a cultural change was needed to bring about a world-wide rural and urban environment less conducive to the development of drug abuse.

4. Having defined a strategy and set priorities with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Programme was seeking to apply them in practice. Projects and activities inherited from the past were being assessed to ensure that objectives were being achieved. While the Programme was looking for a way to balance demand reduction and supply reduction, committing more resources to demand reduction did not necessarily mean lessening efforts in other areas of activity. The main supply-reduction activity was alternative rural development, which was essential to the development process.

(Mr. Giacomelli)

5. In view of the cost involved, the Programme considered it wise to introduce new criteria for involvement in such operations. He suggested as a pre-condition the explicit willingness of other multilateral institutions to cooperate with UNDCP in the same geographic areas in order to take over what was strictly related to rural development. Through funds from those organizations, the Programme would be able to reach the critical mass necessary to confront the all pervasive global drug problem. In that respect, UNDCP was actively pursuing its contacts with a number of international institutions, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to encourage them to include a "drug dimension" in their own policies. In view of its limited resources, the Programme would concentrate on providing seed money for feasibility studies and confidence-building measures among the local population. At a later stage, UNDCP should focus on the drug control aspect of world development projects undertaken under multilateral auspices. Priority should also be given to launching programmes in countries ready to be integrated in a wider subregional strategy.

6. The Programme must enhance its demand-reduction activities in the most affected developing countries. Since drug abuse undercut social development goals, UNDCP was putting great emphasis on elaborating sustainable demand-reduction programmes that were both preventive and rehabilitative in nature. The Programme had continued its efforts to establish effective coordination and cooperation with other bodies in and outside the United Nations system. Its efforts to have the international financial institutions include a "drug dimension" in their programmes and policies should now lead to practical action.

7. In the area of inter-agency cooperation, UNDCP was drawing up cooperation agreements with several United Nations organizations such as UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and IFAD. As part of the Programme's normative functions, model penal and regulatory legislation had been prepared in several languages and for various legal systems, including those of countries in Africa and Eastern Europe. In helping Governments set up adequate drug control structures and define national and regional master plans, UNDCP had convened technical seminars in the Andean and Central American subregions to provide assistance at the request of the countries involved. The national master plan concept was central to the Programme's policy and would be fully meaningful when integrated in a wider regional and global context. Such master plan exercises should be encouraged everywhere, irrespective of level of development.

8. Much attention had been given to developing a coherent approach to subregional cooperation. Two subregional programmes to be carried out by the Governments of China, Myanmar and Thailand were designed to reduce opium cultivation and heroin trafficking along common border areas and lower drug abuse and associated HIV/AIDS infection among hill tribes. Those projects demonstrated the political will of the Governments of the region to join the United Nations in collaborative efforts to deal with the drug menace in South-East Asia.

(Mr. Giacomelli)

9. UNDCP had recently organized in Pakistan a technical consultation meeting on drug issues in South-West Asia. Enhanced subregional cooperation in that area, as elsewhere, was the key to solving the drug problem in the region. In the scientific field, the Programme's laboratory was putting in place a world-wide network of collaborating training centres in order to make maximum use of existing training resources. In its global approach, the Programme was sharply focusing on the growing problems in Africa, Eastern Europe and the States of the former Soviet Union as well as the major threat posed by drug abuse in the cities of the developing world. The Programme was operating without the full administrative integration of the structures of the pre-existing drug control units. It was hoped, therefore, that the General Assembly would soon enable UNDCP to perform its tasks with the efficiency needed to respond to the multiple challenges facing it.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.